

# CONTENTS

What This Book Is About . . . . . **3**

How to Use This Book . . . . . **4**

## **PART I: Watch the Sky**

Brrrrr! . . . . . **5**

Swirl! . . . . . **12**

Splash! . . . . . **19**

Reviewing the Stories . . . . . **26**

## **PART II: Watch the Earth**

Earth Shakes . . . . . **31**

The Mountain Explodes . . . . . **38**

Water Rises . . . . . **45**

Reviewing the Stories . . . . . **52**



This story is about tornadoes. Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.



## Swirl!

A tornado plays an important part in a very famous movie. In *The Wizard of Oz*, a tornado picks up Dorothy's house. The tornado blows the house all the way to the Land of Oz. It drops the house on a wicked witch. That is just a movie tornado. But tornadoes are that powerful in real life, too.

A tornado is a tall column of air. It has a funnel shape. A tornado is created during a thunderstorm. The funnel-shaped column reaches from the thunderstorm to the ground. The tall column of air spins very fast. It is very strong. Sometimes you can't even see a tornado. It is made of air, and it is invisible. Sometimes small drops of water are in the tornado. You can see them. Sometimes the tornado picks up dirt and dust. You can see the dirt swirling around.



Some tornadoes are called *supercells*. These storms last for more than an hour. They can be 10 miles wide and 50,000 feet high. That is almost 10 miles high. Other tornadoes are not as big as supercells. *Landspouts* are narrow tornadoes with water droplets. They form when the thunderstorm cloud is still growing. *Waterspouts* are narrow tornadoes that develop over water. Tornadoes are so important that they have their own measurement scale. They are measured on the *Fujita Scale*. This scale measures the strength of a tornado. The lowest level is F-0. The F-0 level tornado goes about 40–72 miles per hour. It is called a *gale* tornado. It can break branches off trees. The top level is a F-5 tornado. It can go as fast as 261–318 miles per hour. An F-5 tornado is called an *incredible* tornado. An incredible tornado can lift whole houses off the ground. It can throw cars more than 100 yards.

Tornadoes form quickly. It is hard to predict exactly where they will go. But weather forecasters can usually warn people so they have several minutes to get to a safe place.



# Understanding the Story

Here are some questions about the story that you just read. Read each one. Then fill in the circle beside the best answer. If you are not sure, go back and look at the story again.

1. A *tornado* is made of

- (A) dirt and sticks
- (B) water drops
- (C) energy
- (D) air

Factual

2. Supercell tornadoes

- (A) have magical properties
- (B) appear only near big cities
- (C) are smaller and stay in small spaces
- (D) are bigger and stronger than regular tornadoes

Inference

3. What is the name of the scale that tells how strong a tornado is?

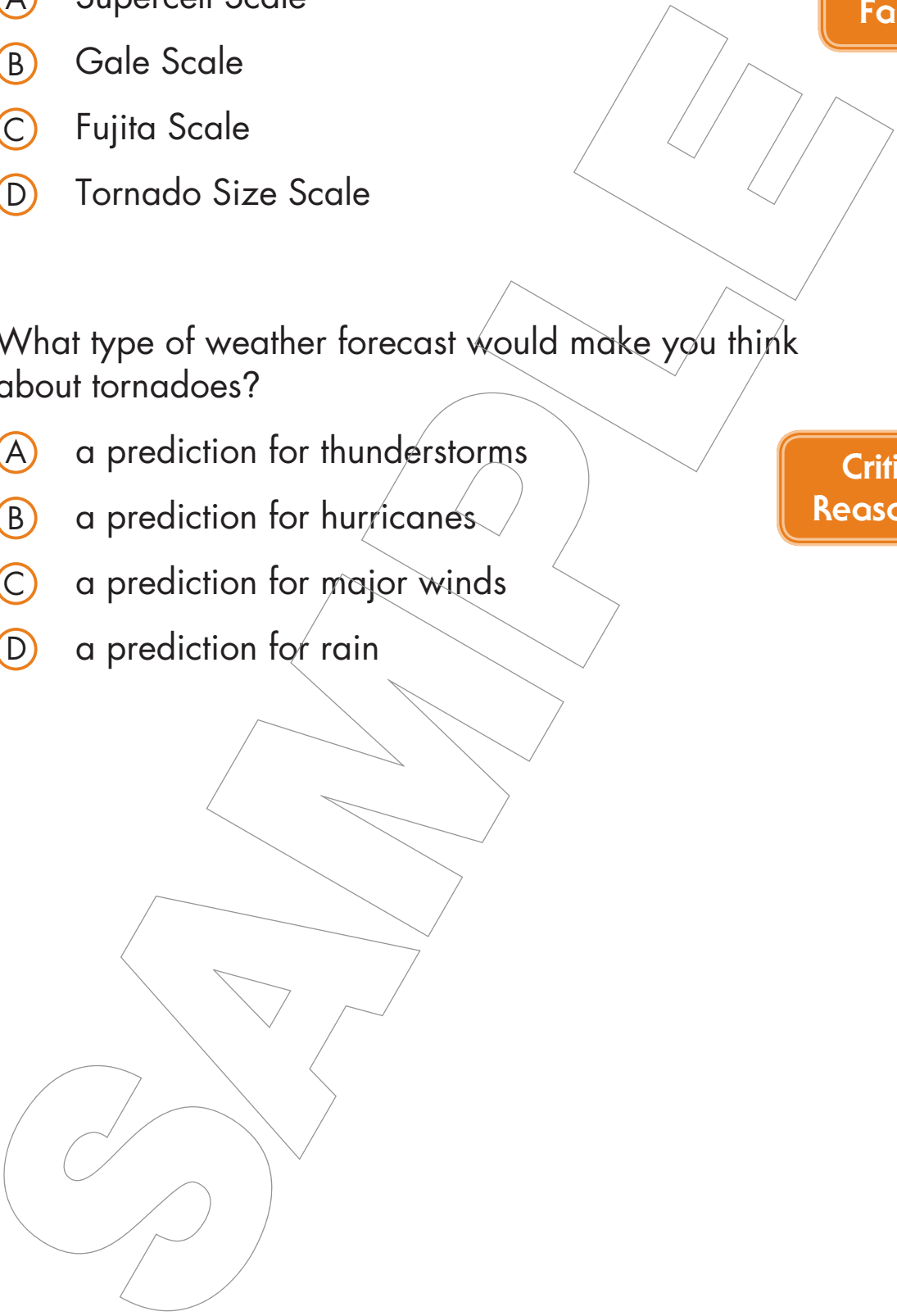
- (A) Supercell Scale
- (B) Gale Scale
- (C) Fujita Scale
- (D) Tornado Size Scale

Factual

4. What type of weather forecast would make you think about tornadoes?

- (A) a prediction for thunderstorms
- (B) a prediction for hurricanes
- (C) a prediction for major winds
- (D) a prediction for rain

Critical Reasoning



5. What level tornado would be between a gale tornado and an incredible tornado?

- (A) level 0
- (B) level 3
- (C) level 5
- (D) level 10

Inference

6. Why do you think the top level tornado is called *incredible*?

- (A) It has special powers.
- (B) It grows bigger and bigger.
- (C) It is hard to understand.
- (D) It can move cars and houses.

Critical Reasoning